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RELEASED IN PART  
B3, CIA, B1, 1.4(D)

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ACTION ARA-01

INFO LOG-00 AMAD-01 CIAE-00 DODE-00 DS-00 HA-09 H-01  
INRE-00 INR-01 L-03 ADS-00 NSAE-00 NSCE-00 OMB-01  
PA-01 PM-01 PRS-01 P-01 SCT-03 SDEL-01 SNP-01  
SP-01 SSC-01 SSO-00 SS-01 TRSE-00 T-01 USIE-00  
/030W

-----AE74C1 202147Z /38

O 202144Z NOV 91  
FM AMEMBASSY CARACAS  
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 6301  
INFO AMEMBASSY BOGOTA  
AMEMBASSY LIMA  
USCINCSO QUARRY HEIGHTS PM

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 CARACAS 12388

CINCSO FOR POLAD

E.O. 12356: DECLCOADR  
TAGS: PGOV, PINS, MARR, VE  
SUBJECT: MINISTER OF DEFENSE REJECTS POSSIBILITY OF A COUP

REF: FBIS ( ) 192020Z NOV 91

B3

1. (C) SUMMARY AND COMMENT: AS HAS HAPPENED SEVERAL  
TIMES OVER THE LAST TWO YEARS WHEN THE POLITICAL  
ATMOSPHERE TURNED SOUR, SOME VENEZUELANAS ARE AGAIN  
EXPRESSING CONCERN THAT THE COUNTRY MAY SUFFER A MILITARY  
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COUP. ANNOUNCING SUCH FEARS IS A TIME-HONORED WAY OF  
GETTING ADDITIONAL MEDIA ATTENTION TO ONE'S COMPLAINTS  
ABOUT SOCIAL AND POLITICAL ILLS AND DOES NOT INDICATE ANY  
REALISTIC POSSIBILITY OF MILITARY INTERVENTION. END  
SUMMARY AND COMMENT.

MINISTER OF DEFENSE DISMISSES POSSIBILITY OF A COUP...

2. (U) IN RESPONSE TO A RECENT QUESTION FROM A  
JOURNALIST, MINISTER OF DEFENSE FERNANDO OCHOA ANTICH  
DISMISSED ANY POSSIBILITY OF A COUP D'ETAT (REFTEL).

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF STATE  
REVIEW AUTHORITY: OSCAR J OLSON  
CLASSIFICATION: CONFIDENTIAL REASON: 1.4(D)  
DECLASSIFY AFTER: 19 NOV 2016  
DATE/CASE ID: 02 AUG 2006 200503195

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OCHOA ACKNOWLEDGED THAT THE COUNTRY WAS UNDERGOING A GRAVE POLITICAL CRISIS AND EXPERIENCING GROWING SOCIAL PROTESTS, BUT NOTED THAT THE EXPEDIENT OF THE COUP HAD ALREADY BEEN TRIED IN VENEZUELA (BEFORE THE 1958 ESTABLISHMENT OF DEMOCRACY) BUT HAD "FAILED." OCHOA CONTINUED THAT CAP HAD THE "ABSOLUTE BACKING" OF THE ARMED FORCES.

...RAISED BY THE SO-CALLED "NOTABLES"

3. (U) THE JOURNALIST'S QUESTION OCCURRED IN THE CONTEXT OF RECENT PUBLIC STATEMENTS BY SUCH "NOTABLES" AS MAN-OF-LETTERS ARTURO USLAR PIETRI AND PHILOSOPHER ERNESTO MAYZ VALLENILLA, WHO AGONIZED THAT VENEZUELA MIGHT FIND A COUP D'ETAT THE ONLY SOLUTION OF THE COUNTRY'S VARIED SOCIAL, POLITICAL, AND ECONOMIC ILLS. USLAR PIETRI, FOR INSTANCE, WARNED OVER THE WEEKEND OF NOVEMBER 16-17 THAT, "WITHOUT EMERGENCY SOLUTIONS OF THE (POLITICAL) CRISIS, WE MAY HAVE A COUP."

AD'S NATIONAL COMMITTEE ACCUSES "NOTABLES" OF WANTING A COUP  
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4. (U) AD'S NATIONAL EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE (CEN) AT ITS WEEKLY MEETING NOVEMBER 18 VOTED TO CONDEMN THE "ANTI-DEMOCRATIC" ATTITUDE RECENTLY ASSUMED BY CERTAIN INDIVIDUALS (READ: THE "NOTABLES") IN ALLEGEDLY CALLING FOR A COUP D'ETAT. SUB-SECRETARY GENERAL LUIS EMILIO RONDON TOLD JOURNALISTS FOLLOWING THE CEN MEETING THAT "THESE PROPOSITIONS ARE CONDEMNABLE BECAUSE THEY ARE ADVANCED BY THOSE WHO, WITHOUT HOPE OF ACHIEVING POWER WITH POPULAR SUPPORT, SEEK TO FAVOR POSITIONS AND TO STRENGTHEN OPINION CONTRARY TO THE BEST DEVELOPMENT OF THE REPUBLIC." RONDON CONTINUED THAT ANY "THESIS OF NATIONAL CONCENTRATION", SUCH AS A PUTATIVE "SINGLE ELECTORAL FRONT," WOULD HAVE TO HAVE THE ENDORSEMENT OF "NATIONAL SOVEREIGNTY," I.E., THE PEOPLE, TO HAVE LEGITIMACY.

5. (C) MANY WHO ARE CONCERNED ABOUT THE PERSISTENCE OF VENEZUELA'S VARIOUS ILLS, PARTICULARLY MASS POVERTY, CAN IMAGINE ONLY TWO ALTERNATIVES TO THE PRESENT SITUATION: POPULAR ANARCHY OR A COUP D'ETAT. OTHERS HOPE THAT PUBLICIZING A WORSE-CASE ALTERNATIVE WILL RAISE CONSCIOUSNESS AMONG POLITICIANS AND OTHER LEADERS. THE RESULT OF ALL THIS TALK HAS BEEN TO HIGHLIGHT COUP POSSIBILITIES IN THE POPULAR MIND HERE, DESPITE 33 YEARS

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OF UNBROKEN DEMOCRACY. FOR EXAMPLE, THE RESPECTED LOCAL  
OPINION POLLING GROUP "CONSULTORES 21" RECENTLY SHARED  
WITH US RESULTS OF A POLL THEY HAD TAKEN ON BEHALF OF  
"UNIVISION" OF LOS ANGELES. THEY ASKED THE FOLLOWING  
QUESTION OF A SAMPLE OF 2877 PERSONS IN FIVE COUNTRIES  
(MEXICO, COLOMBIA, DOMINICAN REPUBLIC, ARGENTINA, AND  
VENEZUELA): "IF THE BAD ECONOMIC SITUATION AND CORRUPTION

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CONTINUE IN THIS COUNTRY, DO YOU THINK THAT THERE WILL BE  
A COUP AND WE WILL HAVE A MILITARY DICTATORSHIP, OR THAT  
DEMOCRACY IS STRONG AND WILL CORRECT THOSE PROBLEMS." THE  
METHODOLOGY OF THIS QUESTION (OR FOR THAT MATTER OF OTHER  
QUESTIONS POSED IN THIS POLL) IS SUSPECT, BUT THE SAMPLE  
IS FAIRLY LARGE AND THE RESULTS ARE INTERESTING, AT LEAST  
ON A COMPARATIVE BASIS. 51 PERCENT OF VENEZUELAN POLLED  
PREDICTED A MILITARY COUP IN THE CIRCUMSTANCES POSTULATED,  
VERSUS 23 PERCENT (MEXICO), 30 (COLOMBIA), 41 (DOMINICAN  
REPUBLIC), AND JUST 7 PERCENT (WHICH RATHER SURPRISES US)  
IN ARGENTINA.

6. (C) IN REALITY, THERE IS LITTLE CHANCE OF A COUP

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ACTION ARA-01

|      |         |         |         |         |         |         |         |
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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 02 OF 02 CARACAS 12388

CINCSO FOR POLAD

E.O. 12356: DECL:OADR  
TAGS: PGOV, PINS, MARR, VE  
SUBJECT: MINISTER OF DEFENSE REJECTS POSSIBILITY OF A COUP

OCCURRING HERE. SCARE-TALK ABOUT COUPS IS COMMON (LAST  
YEAR, ZULIA GOVERNOR ALVAREZ PAZ USED IT SEVERAL TIMES TO  
HIGHLIGHT HIS COMPLAINTS ABOUT SOCIAL AND POLITICAL ILLS),  
AND POPULAR DISCONTENT IS UNQUESTIONABLY HIGH. BUT  
MILITARY INSTITUTIONS WERE CAREFULLY CRAFTED AFTER 1958 TO  
MAKE A SUCCESSFUL COUP ALMOST IMPOSSIBLE. [REDACTED]

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